

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date  
26 May 2005 (26.05.2005)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number  
**WO 2005/047463 A2**

(51) International Patent Classification<sup>7</sup>: C12N Pomezia (IT). TRABONI, Cinzia [IT/IT]; Via Pontina KM. 30, 600, I-00040 Pomezia (IT).

(21) International Application Number: PCT/US2004/036575 (74) Common Representative: MERCK & CO., INC.; 126 East Lincoln Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey 07065-0907 (US).

(22) International Filing Date: 3 November 2004 (03.11.2004)

(25) Filing Language: English (81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NA, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data: 60/517,605 5 November 2003 (05.11.2003) US (84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LU, MC, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

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Published:

— without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: HCV REPLICONS CONTAINING NS5B FROM GENOTYPE 2B

SMSYZ<sup>1</sup>WTGALITPCGPEEEKLPIX<sup>1</sup>PLSNSLX<sup>2</sup>RFHNKVYSTTSRSASLRKKVTFDRVQVLDHYDSVLQDVKRAASKVSARLLTVEEACALTPHSAKSRYGFGAKEVRSLSRRAVNHIRSVWEDLLEDQHTPIDTTIMAKNEVFCIDPTKGKKPARLIIVYPDLGVRVCEKMALYDIAQKLPKAIMGPSYGFQYSPAERVDFFLLKAWGSKDPMGFSYDTRCFDSTVTERDIRTEESIYQAQLSLPQEARTVIHSLTERLYVGGPMTNSKGQSCGYRRCRASGVFTTSMGNTMTCYIKALAACKAAGIVDPVMLVCGDDLVVISESQGNEEDERNLRAFTEAMTRYSAPPGDLPRPEYDLELITSCSSNVSVALDSRGRRRYFLTRDPTTPX<sup>3</sup>TRAAWETVRHSPVNSWLGNIIQYAPTIWVRMVI MTHFFSILLAQDTLNQNLFEMYGAVYSVNPLDLPAIIERLHGLEAFSLHTYSPHELSRVAATLRKLGAPPLRAWKSRARAVRASLIAQGARAACGRYLFNWAVKTKLKLTPLPEASRLDL SGWFTVGAGGGDIYHSVSHARPRLLLLCLLLLGVGVGIFLLPDR

WO 2005/047463 A2

(57) Abstract: The present invention features methods for enhancing the ability of a genotype 2b NS5B sequence to function in a replicon, for producing replicons containing a functional genotype 2b NS5B, and for using replicons to measure the ability of a compound to affect HCV replication that is sustained with the genotype 2b polymerase. Also featured is a genotype 1b NS4B adaptive mutation. The ability to produce replicons containing a functional genotype 2b NS5B is illustrated by the production of chimeric replicons based on HCV genotype 1b where substantially all the NS5B sequence is replaced with a genotype 2b NS5B.